

Public Policy Committee

04/10/08

Jeanette Hall, Roy Kemp, Dale Mahugh, Russ Tempel, Connie Sturgis, Jamie Palagi, Sally Mueller, Angi Rayfield

EPP Process:

We are early in the process and this is all draft at this point. Much of what is in the priority list includes requesting authority to spend federal money. Of most importance, we are asking to retain our case load, adjusting the market rate to the current level and then the federal poverty index to the current level. The Quality piece, involving the quality rating improvement system is not in the presented list, however, we are going to continue on with QRIS plans and use money we have already set up for it to the extent possible. The advocacy group can definitely take the agenda on their own and we can help with the discussion.

Discussion on promoting QRIS:

We discussed QRS. Funding for this initiative is not in the Governor's budget, so to receive additional funding, legislation would need to be introduced through advocacy groups. We discussed the idea of a tax credit for families as an incentive to build into the new QRS system. It was agreed that it would be premature to work on this idea at this point. There was a general discussion regarding how we will promote the new QRS system. This will include efforts to educate the legislature. Mary Jane is working with Mrs. Schweitzer to develop a calendar with parent information that will be distributed to all new parents in Montana.

Dept Heads Meeting on data and finances:

Mary Jane Standaert and Jamie Palagi met with the Governor's Office about School Readiness and the logic model being used for system building and getting all the agencies together to share data. These include Child and Family Services, Child Support Enforcement, OPI, ECSB, and Mental Health. Anna Whiting-Sorrel and Jan Lombardi agreed that they need to meet with the DPHHS Director and/or division administrators to discuss the big picture. This should happen, hopefully, before the September MECAC meeting.

Bureau Chief meeting being arranged by group that went to Baltimore:

Mary Jane Standaert and Sally Mueller went to a meeting in Baltimore. From this meeting they have decided to pull Bureau Chief's together, not the division administrators, but the ones actually doing the work or can direct their staff and do more work on system building and how we can share and collaborate together. If we knew what mental health was doing, child care could be right there with them.

MAC Agenda:

There is not an agenda at this time.

Collaboration Needs Assessment:

Table for next meeting

School Readiness Summit:

The school readiness summit will be held May 21 and 22, 2008 in Helena. Some issues that will be addressed at the summit will be transitioning into and out of childcare and public schools and forming collaborations and systems for collaboration.

The Economic Impact Study of Child Care will be released.

Background checks:

Childcare should not be included in the current SJR 7. Childcare is already included with the Volunteer for Child Act and another act in Montana already does background checks and will do FBI checks if needed. Child Care Licensing only checks back 5 years, while LUP/LUI goes back to the age of 18. Discuss the possibility of employers having the results of the background checks.

Raise of minimum wage to \$7/hr:

Could cause people to be ineligible for scholarships